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## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

James Russell Lowell in a hitherto unpublished essay in the December Century says: "There are certain books which it is necessary to read; but they are very few. Looking at the matter from an esthetic point of view merely, I should say that thus far only one man had been able to use types so universal, and to draw figures so cosmopolitan, that they are equally true in all languages and equally acceptable to the whole Indo-European branch, at least, of the human family. That man is Homer, and there needs, it seems to me, no further proof of his individual existence than this very fact of the solitary unapproachableness of the Iliad and the Odyssey. The more wonderful they are, the more likely to be the work of one person. Nowhere is the purely natural man presented to us so nobly and sincerely as in these poems."

Not far below these I should place the Divina Commedia of Dante, in which the history of the spiritual man is sketched with equal command of material and grandeur of outline. Don Quixote stands upon the same level, and receives the same universal appreciation. Here we have the spiritual and the natural man set before us in humorous contrast. In the knight and his squire Cervantes has typified the two opposing poles of our dual nature—the imagination and the understanding as they appear in contradiction. This is the only comprehensive satire ever written, for it is utterly independent of time, place, and manners.

Faust gives us the natural history of the human intellect, Mephistopheles being merely the projected impersonation of that skepticism which is the inevitable result of a purely intellectual culture. These four books are the only ones in which universal facts of human nature and experience are ideally represented. They can therefore never be displaced.

I have not mentioned Shakespeare because his works come under a different category. Though they mark the very highest level of human genius, they yet represent no special epoch in the history of the individual mind. The man of Shakespeare is always the man of actual life as he is acted upon by the worlds of sense and of spirit under certain definite conditions. We all of us may be in the position of Macbeth or Othello or Hamlet, and we appreciate their sayings and deeds potentially, so to speak, rather than actually, through

the sympathy of our common nature and not of our experience."

Blue and Gray for December opens with a handsome and artistic colored frontispiece, showing the old liberty bell in a Christmas wreath of holly. "How Unc' Eph' Bought Herself" is an excellent Christmas story in choice dialect, by George P. Northrop. "Union Jack's" serial, "With Farragut on the Hartford," is accompanied this month by four splendid illustrations, by Xanthus Smith, descriptive of the fight at New Orleans. This serial is growing more interesting each month, and Mr. Smith's special skill in naval technique gives unusual value to his pictures. General Horatio C. King continues his "Recollections of War Times," Mrs. Bruce concludes her "A Belated Honeymoon," and Mr. L. W. Wallace contributes some of his conclusions regarding "Meade at Gettysburg." The Patriotic Youth's Department is very strong, giving a biographical sketch of Mr. George W. Childs, and a most captivating illustrated paper on "The Old Liberty Bell and its Home," besides a number of shorter articles of a patriotic character. This magazine has now completed the first year of its existence, and enters its second year well established in the hearts of our patriotic citizens in all sections. (Patriotic American Co., Philadelphia.)

A Japanese pupil of Mr. Lafcadio Hearn has asked him in horror and amazement how it is that the strange subjects of love and marriage are so freely treated in English novels. This gives Mr. Hearn occasion to tell in his article, "Of the Eternal Feminine," in the December Atlantic, how different a place women occupy in Japan and in America and Europe. Equally noteworthy is Mr. F. B. Sanborn's article on "Thoreau and His English Friend Thomas Chalmers." The paper is made up mainly of letters between a young Englishman of no common character and the naturalist and philosopher whose name is coming more and more to be coupled, like Emerson's and Hawthorne's, with Concord in its best days. Mrs. Wiggin provides the short story of the number in "Ton o' the Blueberry Plains," a pathetic sketch of New England life. Mrs. Cavazza's story, "The Man from Aldone," has its third, last and most effective part. Charles Egbert Craddock continues "His Vanished Star." Studies of nature are nearly always expected in the Atlantic, and from Mr. Bradford Torrey and Mr. Frank Bolles the readers of the magazine have learned to expect very charming papers. Such, indeed, are "In the Flat Woods," by Mr. Torrey, and "Birds at Yule-Tide," by Mr. Bolles. To these are added the

vivid pictures of Mr. Hamlin Garland's "Western Landscapes." An unsigned paper, "Ideal Transit," suggests, half whimsically, a pleasant solution of all the difficulties of travel. Professor Woodrow Wilson, in "Mere Literature," makes a plea for the study of books not as subjects of scientific inquiry. "Democracy in America," by Professor Francis Newton Thorpe, is of interest particularly to students of our social history. "The Blazing Heart," a poem by Mrs. Alice Williams Brotherton, and the usual departments fill out this strong concluding number of the Atlantic's one hundred and thirty-fourth volume.

Elegant tailor made garments or those for the promenade are of plain cloth. They are often beautifully braided or trimmed with a soutache of another shade. A novel way of using fur is in perpendicular bands on the seams, starting from a fur head at about the height of the knee. Odd combinations are encouraged, and black and white though not new still continue in high favor. The mingling of lace embroidery and fur form the rich fashions of the present moment. The Eton Jacket and Figaro and Zouave seem likely to remain fashionable for some time to come. A feature of this season's fashions is the richness of the materials used in gowns. The new dahlia tint, myrtle and brown are much seen in woolen goods combined with moire silk. These items of interest give only a faint idea of the many instructive points contained in the McDowell Illustrated Magazines from which they have been selected. These journals are the standard authorities in either Paris, London or America on everything pertaining to fashion. Besides their useful information they give valuable lessons to dressmakers and offer unusual inducements in the form patterns and coupons.

The December number of "Tales From Town Topics" presents, with its usual farrago of miscellaneous reading, a complete novel by Charles Stokes Wayne, entitled, "Anthony Kent." It is a tale of love that is both bad and pure, and its scenes are laid in Venice, Monte Carlo, Paris and New York. Anthony Kent's experience in loving a beautiful adventuress, and afterwards meeting and losing his heart to the woman's innocent young daughter who has been deserted as a baby by her unnatural mother, is such as to hold the attention of most readers, and to make the story admirable as a piece of literature.

The multiplicity and excellence of other magazines, far from lessening the usefulness of the Reviews of Reviews makes this unique periodical more and

more a necessity. Its indexes, condensations of leading articles, classified lists of new books, and general survey of written things said, and things done during the month preceding its issue, would suffice to keep the reader in touch with the current of life and thought, even if we were able to read nothing else. The December issue is full of freshness as its predecessors have been regularly been; and to those who know the Reviews of Reviews this is a sufficient commendation.

**Mitchell's Plans.**  
Charlie Mitchell, the pugilist, closed his theatrical season in Philadelphia last week. He has gone to Florida to begin training. He is abstaining entirely from alcoholic stimulants of all kinds. Mitchell says he will certainly be on hand the night of the fight and expects to win.

Asked about the extra height and reach of Corbett, Mitchell said: "I know he is four inches or so taller than I am and that I am giving a lot away, but he is liable to make a mistake. The best of us do. If he does I shall nail him. If I make it he'll nail me—in all probability."

"Do you think the fight will come off in Florida?"

"I see no reason why it should not, do you? Everything seems settled. I'm willing, Corbett's willing. Why shouldn't it?"

"Is it right that you may train near Philadelphia?"

"Yes, I like this part of the country very well. The climate suits me and I can get everything I want; besides I have heard that Florida is a malarial kind of a place, that is one in which a man might contract malaria in training. Now I have had malaria once, and don't want it again, nor to take any chances with it. I want to enter the ring as fit as the proverbial fiddle, and as I can get to Jacksonville from here in a little over twenty-four hours what is the use of going down there to train?"

Peter Jackson and Joe Choynski are also in Philadelphia, but neither cared to make a comparison of Corbett and Mitchell. Both contented themselves with saying that fighting, like horse racing, is "mighty unsartin."

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